THEATER News and Stage Chat.

Friends of Last Week.

Clara Lipman's Plays.

CLARA LIPMAN is writing more plays.

This is not alone the result of the success attending "Julie Bonbon," but because Miss Lipman has more ideas in her clever little head that look as if they might have box office receipts if properly executed. One play at a time does not consume her attention, but she confesses that several have been started, and she goes at each one just as the inspiration catches her.

Miss Lipman and her husband, Louis Mann, are in the same plight that nine-tenths of American actors find themselves to-day. There are no plays. Both acknowledge that they have read and read until their heads swim and still no result. And now that Miss Lipman cannot find anyone to write plays that suit her she purposes writing them for herself. Furthermore, she will know what she is getting.

This versatile wife of a clever comedian has a head full of ideas as to how things dramatic should be run and if there were more of such confirmed actor-playwrights before the public the many vicissitudes which each season not only confront but throw managers and actors alike might overcome, if not averted.

She sends a word out to play makers. "Let them bring their plays to the actors—not to the managers," she says, and therein lies the solving of the problem. Managers have convenient little pigeonholes for new plays and into these curious places goes many an output of a nervous brain. But Miss Lipman declares the stage has reached a crisis and that plays are not only needed but that if the writers will just bring them to the actors—the real wage-earners of the stage, who are clamoring for them—some vehicle may be found in the lot which a manager would easily overlook, and perhaps a few new writers for the stage will be found.

Miss Lipman is one of the few talented women of the stage who has the gift of writing and therefore she can furnish herself with material when she fails to find it elsewhere. She declares everything is written for men and the women are overlooked. Although she has given Mr. Mann nearly the whole of "Julie Bonbon," she confesses that it was not a difficult task because he is easy to fit. But if the truth were known, more than one of the plays that are now under way in Miss Lipman's fertile brain are intended to give a certain feminine star her rightful share of the limelight's glow.

In her dressing room Miss Lipman spends most of her time studying up new ideas and inspirations, and even though "Julie Bonbon" has been running many months she still watches every scene with an author's discriminating care and the first suggestion of a "drop" in any one of the clever situations is immediately caught by its author and corrected before the next performance.

Miss Lipman owns up to no mascots or fads except the little white ball of a poodle who figures so conspicuously in the play and a deal sight more in the affections of her charming mistress.

Played With the Elder Sothern.

MISS IDA LEWIS, who has been playing Mrs. Van Brunt in "Julie Bonbon" at the Belasco this week, has probably played in more of the productions that have made stage history than any other woman still actively connected with the stage. She must have begun in swaddling clothes.

She played several seasons with Joseph Jefferson in one of his early "Rip Van Winkle" companies—she and her son together. They played the two children.

She played leading lady with the elder Sothern when he was keeping his audiences in a gale of laughter with his inimitable Lord Dundreary in "Our American Cousin." She played with him the last time he ever played, in a benefit performance of "Sam," for Frank T. Raymond. Mr. Sothern died abroad during the vacation that followed.

She presided over E. H. Sothern's debut and spoke for him the few words that he was too rattled to speak for himself.

After Sothern's death she supported Charlotte Thompson, and then went out at the head of companies of her own. She played "East Lynne" in the days when "East Lynne" was young, and made a tremendous hit in it. She played "Jane Eyre"—does any one remember ever having seen "Jane Eyre" played? Well, it was tremendously popular a generation ago, and there were three great "Jane Eyres"—Charlotte Thompson, Maggie Mitchell, and Ida Lewis.

She is today one of the very good old—oh, no, hardly that—middle aged stage women. She can play the mother or the chaperon parts to perfection. And she can play equally convincingly the broadest comedy old woman or the gentlest aristocrat. Oh, no, she doesn't have to play the aristocrat, though she is proud of saying that he's a mongrel. She can afford to. Her account of her origin is amusing and characteristic. "My father," she says, "was a Scotch gentleman; my mother an English gentlewoman; I, myself, was born in Havana, and brought up in New Orleans by a black mammy. If that doesn't make a yellow dog, I don't know what does. All I missed was an incubator, and I needed that, for I only weighed a little over two pounds when I arrived."

Charley Case's "Wardrobe."

CHARLEY CASE never sees a show. While his co-workers on the bill are giving their performances he is making up, and by the time he gets out of the theater everybody else is finished. That is one of the penalties of being a "headliner," for the distinction calls for a position along toward the middle of the bill, and that means the entire afternoon and evening in the theater.

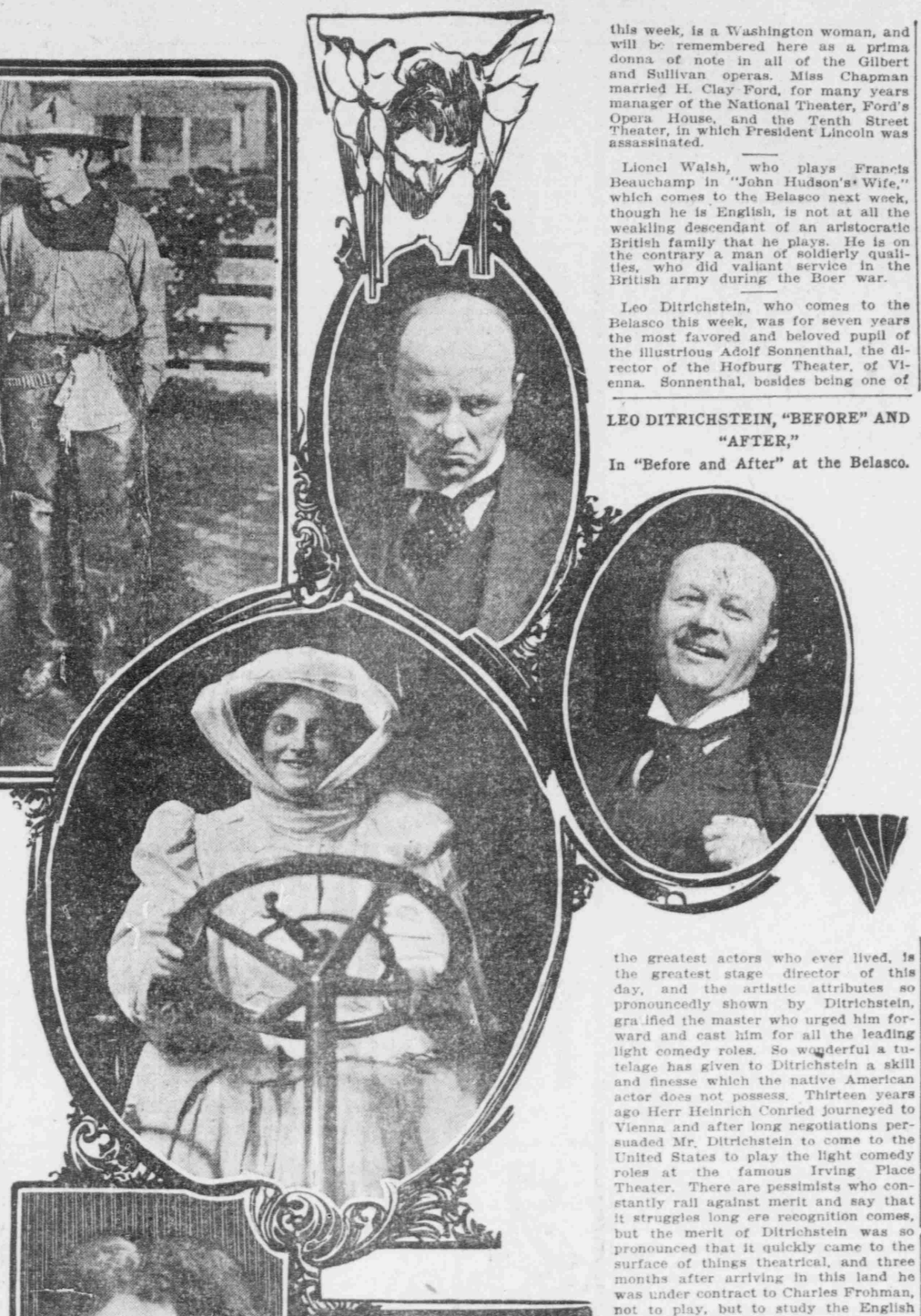
Case is "the man who talks about his father" and who last week gave the Chase audience a clever run of stories. As a matter of fact, he does not talk about his father a bit more than about any other member of the family, only, as the boys say, he "hands it to his pater a little rougher."

Although he acknowledges it with a great deal of reluctance, Charley Case was once a lawyer in the little town of Lockport, N. Y., and after reading law for some time with prominent firms of the city he started out to practice. Somehow or other there is a bit of haziness as to just what followed, but he says that when he returned to the town some years later as a monologist the thought struck him that he could have made a fortune if his old neighbors had received him as seriously as a lawyer as they persisted in viewing his efforts as a comedian.

Vaudeville audiences have little idea of the personality of performers like Case. They see only his black face and cannot disassociate him from the long string of yarns that form the medium of his entertainment. But, strange as it may see, Case is passionately fond of music, and when in New York he spends every spare minute of his time at the concerts in Carnegie Hall and catching snatches of the opera at the Metropolitan.

He is known among the stage hands of the various theaters in which he has been appearing for fifteen years as "The Stage Hands' Joy." Why? Well, because there are no "props" to his act except the one he carries in his hand grip—the only luggage that goes with his act. The "one" is a rubber band which Case twirls and twists all the time he is backbiting his relations and, though only his intimates know it, he could no more give his monologue without that rubber band than he could help telling family secrets. When the comedian comes into the theater he carries only the aforesaid grip, which contains a wig, a box of burnt cork, a piece of soap, a towel, a pair of black gloves, a dress coat and a celluloid collar. The importance of this "wardrobe" to his clever act is apparent and there isn't a stage hand or property man in the business who wouldn't wait on him—just because there's nothing to be done.

DUSTIN FARNUM AND BENNET MUSSON,
In "The Virginian," Columbia.



LEO DITRICHSTEIN, "BEFORE" AND "AFTER,"
In "Before and After" at the Belasco.

ELSIE JANIS,
In "The Vanderbilt Cup," at the National.

DWIGHT ELMENDORF,
Who Will Give a Series of "Travel Talks" at the National.

Behind the Footlights.

"THE Girl From the Golden West" and "The Lion and the Mouse" are both preparing for their four hundredth New York performance, the one on October 29, the other on October 30. Miss Bates could probably play "the Girl" indefinitely, but duty, or, rather, contracts, call, and she leaves New York in November. "The Lion and the Mouse" announces no date for its departure, but its four hundredth performance is to be marked by the distribution of specially illustrated copies of the novelization by Klein & Hornblow of the play. The novel is published by G. W. Dillingham, and has been so successful that a fourth edition is now going to press.

Blanche Walsh is a full partner with Wagenhals & Kemper in the lease of the new Astor Theater, in Times Square, alongside the Hotel Astor. This handsome and commodious playhouse was erected by M. R. Bimberg, otherwise known to fame as Bim, the Button Man. Bim has brilliant pink hair and is fired by a laudable ambition to excel the achievements of Oscar Hammerstein as a theater builder.

Madame Elenora Duse, the Italian actress, lately acquired the rights, by cable, for Italy, of Henry Knoblauch's great play, "The Shulamite," in which Miss Lena Ashwell, the famous emotional English actress, made her American debut, under Shubert management, at the Garrick Theater, Chicago, on Monday, October 15. Madame Duse saw Miss Ashwell in "The Shulamite" at the Savoy Theater, in London, last season, and complimented her upon her brilliant performance. Madame Duse cabled that she intended to produce the play at once.

Dustin Farnum, who comes to the Columbia Theater for the third time in "The Virginian," appeared in the play last spring in Cheyenne, Wyo., which is the geographic point around which the story revolves. The tiny wild-western opera house was crowded to the roof with cowboys. After the celebration which followed the performance the cow punchers insisted on trading belts, "chaps," revolvers, and other parts of their own outfits for similar parts of equipment worn by the stage cowboys. The result has added realism to the play, for the things now worn by the players have all seen real service.

Edna May's play and London appearance have been at last decided on. Charles Frohman has accepted "Nellie Neill," by cable. The book and lyrics are by C. M. S. McLennan, author of "The Belle of New York." It is a modern play in three acts, with music by Ivan Caryll.

Marie Booth Russell, Robert Mantell's leading woman, has a decided literary tendency, and, with that player, has prepared the acting edition of Ibsen's great epic drama, "Brand," which Mr. Mantell will use during his New York engagement.

At a gambol at the Lambs Club, a night or so ago, Edwin Stevens entertained the members with a monologue, in the shape of a joint debate between Mr. Hughes and Mr. Hearst. It made such a hit that all the leading vaudeville managers want to book Mr. Stevens in it, but thus far he has refused.

These Lambs Club gambols have produced several good plays. "The Struggle Everlasting," the new play by Edwin Milton Royle, which Henry B. Harris will produce in January, is based upon a one-act play given last season at a Lambs gambol. "The Squawman," which proved to be one of the greatest successes of recent years, first came to the notice of managers in a similar manner.

Eugene Redding, who plays the amusing role of Colonel Larivette in Leo Ditrichstein's latest and greatest farce success, "Before and After," which will be at the Belasco next week, is a Frenchman, by name Joseph Ribodeaux, and when he steps into the smooth-fitting role chosen for him by Manager Robert Hunter, he simply plays himself.

Arnold Daly, having quarreled with the Shuberts, has now filed a petition in bankruptcy, with known liabilities of $10,471, and no available assets. Alas, poor Daly! It's a terrible thing, this being too strong to work!

It is said that little Katie Barry, now star of "Mam'selle Sallie," has scored the greatest success of any of her achievements. If she is really funnier than when the slavey in "A Chinese Honeymoon," the new piece will be worth while.

Thomas E. Shea, who is always sure of a warm welcome, and deserves all he gets, promises that his repertoire during his engagement here will include his new play, "Napoleon the Great," by Channing Pollock; "The Bells," "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," "Othello," and "Richelieu." The only trouble with that is that it will cost his admirers real money, for they will naturally want to see him in as many parts as possible.

Blanche Chapman, one of the company playing "The Vanderbilt Cup," which is at the New National Theater this week, is a Washington woman, and will be remembered here as a prima donna of note in all of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Miss Chapman married H. Clay Ford, for many years manager of the National Theater, Ford's Opera House, and the Tenth Street Theater, in which President Lincoln was assassinated.

Lionel Walsh, who plays Francis Beauchamp in "John Hudson's Wife," which comes to the Belasco next week, though he is English, is not at all the weakling descendant of an aristocratic British family that he plays. He is on the contrary a man of soldierly qualities, who did valiant service in the British army during the Boer war.

Leo Ditrichstein, who comes to the Belasco this week, was for seven years the most favored and beloved pupil of the illustrious Adolf Sonnenthal, the director of the Hofburg Theater, of Vienna. Sonnenthal, besides being one of the greatest actors who ever lived, is the greatest stage director of this day, and the artistic attributes so pronouncedly shown by Ditrichstein, gratified the master who urged him forward and cast him for all the leading light comedy roles. So wonderful a tutelage has given to Ditrichstein a skill and finesse which the native American actor does not possess. Thirteen years ago Herr Heinrich Conried journeyed to Vienna and after long negotiations persuaded Mr. Ditrichstein to come to the United States to play the light comedy roles at the famous Irving Place Theater. There are pessimists who constantly rail against merit and say that it struggles long ere recognition comes, but the merit of Ditrichstein was so pronounced that it quickly came to the surface of things theatrical, and three months after arriving in this land he was under contract to Charles Frohman, not to play, but to study the English language so that he could play at some future time. For thirteen months that condition existed, then when able he was cast for the part of Zou Zou in the original production of "Trilby."

Maud Adams' receipts for three days in Rochester with "Peter Pan" were $7,700. At least her press agent says so.

Elsie Janis, the star of "The Vanderbilt Cup," gave her first "public" performance in Washington. It was at the White House, and was given before President and Mrs. McKinley and the members of the Cabinet. Elsie Janis was then "Little Elsie," just twelve years of age.

Guy Bates Post will be numbered among the stars next season. He will be under the management of J. Fred Zimmermann, who is even now looking to the details of his tour. No announcement has yet been made as to the play or character of part in which Mr. Post will start out on his own account, but there is every indication that he will be fitted with something worth while. Mr. Post was recently in Washington, being featured in the leading role of "The Heir to the Hoorah," and his artistic work in a commonplace role was exceedingly interesting.

Edward S. Willard will come to Washington for his annual engagement on January 7. The principal feature of his repertoire will be "Colonel Newcome," which he recently presented on this side for the first time. His old successes will also find place in the bill with only a single performance, however.

Stage Gossip From The Great White Way

WITH half a dozen novelties on Broadway this week the local theatergoer who makes a point of keeping up with the procession, has had a fairly busy time of it. Two of the aforesaid novelties were furnished by Henry B. Irving at the New Amsterdam. Monday night he tried "The Lyons Mail," one of his father's great successes, prefaced by a one-act play by Edmund Phipps, arranged for the stage by Sir Henry Irving. On Thursday night he revived Charles I, another of his father's plays.

Cannot Fill His Father's Shoes.

It must be admitted that the experiment has proved conclusively that young Irving cannot fill his father's shoes no matter how gracefully he may wear his own. It has left Broadway for once agreeing with William Winter's verdict that the younger man "is an expert actor, but, compared with his father, he is only a shadow." Naturally in assuming characters in which the late Sir Henry Irving was supreme and unapproachable, H. B. Irving unavoidably places his acting in direct comparison with that of his illustrious father.

There could be no greater testimony to the greatness of Sir Henry Irving's genius than the fact that "The Lyons Mail" still survives. No one ever saw him in the dual roles of Joseph Lesurques, merchant of Paris, and Dubosc, captain of a gang of thieves, is ever likely to forget the refined gentleness of the one, the grim, sardonic humor of the other. But the play as a play is a creaking old melodrama at the best, and only inspired interpretation of the double role can hide its clap-trap. Mr. Irving's interpretation is not inspired. His Lesurques is the better performance of the two. He could not lose his own intellectual personality in the cunning, brutal rascality of Dubosc. There are some capital bits in his performance, but as a whole it is too exact, too mechanical, suggesting too strongly that he is wound up like a clock to go for three acts and six scenes and stop.

In "King Rene's Daughter," which was used as a curtain raiser, Mr. Irving did not appear. It gave his wife, Dorethea Baird, an opportunity to look charming and act acceptably the part of the blind daughter of a king, whose sight is restored. There is almost no action in the play, but Miss Baird played the part of the afflicted girl with a tender grace that won her audience. She had no part in "The Lyons Mail."

In "Charles I," the play written for Sir Henry, by W. G. Wills, Henry B. Irving makes a better impression than in either of the two plays in which he has so far appeared. Mr. Irving has inherited some of the grand manner in which his father surpassed all actors of the day. He plays "Charles I" with authority and dignity, and his creation of the character is clear and convincing. At every stage it is intelligent and earnest, and at times tenderly appealing and sincere.

His best scene is, perhaps, the meeting with Cromwell at Whitehall, and the reproof administered with the fine scorn of majesty and righteousness. The scene of the King's parting with his wife and children is pathetic in the extreme, and the final picture showing him about to pass on to execution leaves the audience genuinely affected. Not only Mr. Irving himself but his entire company appear to better advantage than heretofore. Miss Baird is very beautiful in the royal robes of Queen Henrietta Maria and plays simply and earnestly. Frank Tyers plays an admirable Cromwell, powerful, blunt, rugged, direct in speech, a splendid contrasting figure to that of Charles.

Young Mr. Irving has apparently been somewhat hurt by the criticisms of his taste in appearing in his father's great roles. He explained Thursday that it was not a question of his own taste but of obedience to his father's wishes. It appears that according to the actor's will, it is necessary to keep the plays in active repertoire to insure a regular income from them. It was further provided in the will that if this were not done the plays should be sold at auction.

Rivals "'Way Down East."

There could have been no stronger contrast to Mr. Irving and "The Lyons Mail" than that furnished by the other Monday night opening—"Cape Cod Folks," at the Academy. "Cape Cod Folks" is not at all in the art for art's sake class, but it is likely to entertain larger and more enthusiastic audiences than if it were. It is a dramatization by Earl W. Mayo, of a once famous novel of the same name by Sarah McL. Greene. It tells one of those homely stories palpitating with heart interest, such as that set forth in "'Way Down East" and "The Old Homestead," but surpasses both of these old favorites in spectacular features. Virtue and beauty triumph in the end, of course, and the villain who has been making love to two girls loses them both. The play fairly reeks with the salt air of Cape Cod and portrays the simple life of the fisher folk in a fashion that evidently suits the audience. Judging from the repeated applause and curtain calls, play and players have made a decided hit. The cast is an exceptionally strong one, including among others Earle Brown, E. J. Ratcliffe, Charles Mackay, J. O. Le Brasse, George Richards, John D. O'Hara, Harry Montgomery, Sarah Perry, Bessie Barriscale, Lizzie Conway, and Anna Wheaton.

Probably the hardened first nighter was more interested in the opening of William Gillette's "Clarice" Tuesday night at the Garrick, than in any of the others of the week's events, and "Clarice" is rather a disappointment. It is doubtful whether it will add much to Gillette's reputation either as an actor or as an author. "Clarice" is billed as a comedy drama—comedy melodrama would be more exact—first act comedy, and the last three melodrama, with a slight admixture of farce. As the first act was very long—it lasted nearly an hour—the evening was pretty evenly divided between the comedy and the melodrama. It tells the story of Dr. Carrington, a convalescent invalid, who loves, and is loved by, his ward, Clarice. In his earlier years the girl's aunt has thrown herself at his head and he has dodged. Now a Washington doctor, Denbeigh, is in love with Clarice. Finding how matters stand the woman scorned produces a plot—even she describes it as the kind that grows in the theater—to convince Carrington that his malady of the lungs, instead of being cured, has reached the fatal and infectious stage. Denbeigh consents, Carrington assumes the familiar attitude of self-sacrifice, sends Clarice away, and in stage despair takes poison. But the girl has a moment of sanity and the doctor a moment of remorse. When Carrington is at the point of death the two revive him with a hypodermic injection.

Gillette's Play a Disappointment.

In the first act Clarice, and Carrington gradually discover that they are in love, and see no reason why they shouldn't be, and the frightfully realistic melodrama of the succeeding acts seems superfluous. The first act is perfect, and idyllic, and left the house enthusiastic, but the enthusiasm cooled and the curtain went down on something like a frost.

Of course Gillette is always Gillette. He brings to all his productions his expert stage craft, to all his impersonations his appealing personality, and the powerful restraint of his acting. His personal popularity will undoubtedly carry the piece to a nominal success. He was a pleasant, wholesome, manly sort of a lover in the first act, with none of the gripping melodramatic intensity of his familiar manner. That he used effectively later on. Marie Doro has never been more charming to look upon, and has never acted with half such skill and appealing sincerity. Frank Burbeck contributed some good comedy work, though there were times when it came perilously near to farce, and Lucille La Verne scored a hit as a negro servant.

Alan Dale says of the play—and for once he is not unduly severe—"The theme is sad where it isn't foolish, and foolish where it isn't sad. It is mercilessly theatrical. * * * As a play it is unworthy of the author of 'Secret Service.' * * * Let Gillette keep away from the dissecting room drama."

"Sam Houston" is Not a Hit.

Tuesday night also saw the New York premiere at the Garden Theater of "Sam Houston," written and played by Clay Clement. It is a good subject for a play—the turbulent birth of the vastest of the family of American Commonwealths, but with the best will in the world Clay Clement is not the man to write it. Texas and old Sam Houston of sturdy memory must wait yet a while longer.

The piece, as presented at the Garden Theater, is a curious medley. Mr. Clement has tried in it to do too much and too little. He has seized some fine moments in the checkered career of the first and only president of Texas, and he has not used them altogether ill. But he has made a Chauncey Olcott-like play of it, all strung with old, sweet songs and little children on the one hand, and speeches of dead and gone politics, forgotten issues and war oratory. There is a hard working war drama mob, which cheers and shouts lustily; a couple of nice, tame battle horses, with suitably dusty riders; a tiny yellow-haired waif, with bobbing curls and nice white stockings. But the Alamo is forgotten. The war cry of half a century ago falls on cold ears. Mr. Clement works manfully, but ineffectively, and his supporting company, though large, does not, with the exception of Marie Taylor as "Roaring Kate," help him much.

An Unexpected Success.

Wednesday saw the reopening of the Madison Square Theater, with "The Three of Us," a new play, written by Miss Rachael Crothers, a new playwright, played by Miss Carlotta Nillson, one of the many new-made stars of this uncommonly stellar period, and produced by George Foster Platt, a newcomer among Broadway producers. And this novel aggregation has made good. It is a Western mining play, but not the conventional Western mining play presenting the melodrama of out-of-door life in a mining town. It pictures instead the winter home life of a small circle of tenderfoots from the Eastern States and England; no red shirts, no whisky, no shooting irons, just the fourth wall removed from three commonplace rooms, and a lot of commonplace people living out their lives quietly, yet with the pulse of actuality and occasionally the throb of tense emotion.

It is the sort of thing Howells might have written had he gone in for playwriting—not with the large appeal of "The Great Divide," but as austerely simple and bravely true.

Rye Macchesney, played by Carlotta Nillson, is a girl of flesh and blood, sympathetic, wise and unselfish, loyal to her word though given unadvisedly, independent in action and heroic in her independence. She is an Eastern girl, an orphan who, with her two younger brothers, is waiting in poverty to dispose of their joint inheritance, the "Three Of Us" mine. Rye's sweetheart makes his long awaited strike, which affects a neighboring claim also, and tells her of it. Her shiftless brother, Clem, overhears the information and sells it, with results which discredit his sister's personal honesty, estrange her from her sweetheart and even compromised her character. It all comes right, of course, and in a very interesting way.

She plays it well, and is supported by a capable company, who make one feel the pinch of poverty, the corrosion of hope deferred, the moments of love and joyful anticipation, the disappointment of frustration, doubt, misunderstanding, distrust, and recrimination.

Frederick Truesdell, Jane Peyton, and Eva Vincent share the honors with Miss Nillson.

"The Measure of a Man," which was to have opened Thursday night at Weber's Theater, was postponed until tonight on account of the illness through ptomaine poisoning of Miss Mary Hall, who plays one of the leading parts. "The Measure of a Man" is a new play by Cora Maynard, produced by Nixon & Zimmerman. It opened in Philadelphia a few weeks ago and was well received in the Quaker City. Its animating motive is the conflict of ideals—the bitter war between two well-known varieties of honor, "business" and "private." The severest criticism at its opening was that it "sags grievously in the middle," but that defect has probably been remedied. It is played by a capable company headed by a quartet—Robert Drouet, E. M. Holland, Percy Haswell, and Mary Hall—who are in themselves a guarantee of excellent acting. Holland plays the part of Christopher Guthrie, said to be modeled on the character of John D. Rockefeller.

"The Stolen Story" Again On.

"The Stolen Story" is not to be permanently retired after all. This will be good reading to many who were interested in the play, and were correspondingly disappointed to learn that for some unexplainable reason Manager Savage had summarily discarded it. It has been withdrawn from the Garden Theater, but James W. Allison has bought it from Mr. Savage and will produce it in Shubert houses. This week it has been playing at the Shubert Theater, Brooklyn, with its entire New York cast—Jameson Lee Finney, Joseph M. Sparks, R. Peyton Carter, Dorothy Tenant, Beverly Sitgraves, and all the rest of them—and seems to have done well.

George Cohan has seen the error of his way. "Popularity," his first attempt at a non-musical play, having shamelessly belied its name, is to be be withdrawn and made over into a musical play. George believes in giving the people what they want—and he's the boy that can do it, too!—since they want music in his shows, he's quite ready to oblige. Nothing approaching "a mean disposition" about George.

Lillian Russell does not seem to have fared any better than Cohan in her